

From the Land

SUMMER/1980

The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter



Photograph courtesy of Charles Brown

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Summer/1980

Published for the members of
The Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy
W. Kent Olson, *Executive Director*
Susan D. Cooley, *Associate Director*
Janet E. Bechtel, *Office Manager and Editor*
Winifred F. Wright, *Master Plan Coordinator*
Marjorie L. Eaton, *Secretary*
Suzanne Wilkins, *Land Trust Service Bureau, Director*

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W. KENT OLSON NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ken Olson joined the Connecticut Chapter staff on July 1. His acceptance of the executive director's job ended a four-month search by the Board of Trustees. In Ken the Chapter enjoys a man of many talents, and the Trustees and staff look forward to the productive years ahead.

Ken comes to TNC after three years as the Director of Publications for the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) and three years as the Manager of the AMC Hut System. In the latter capacity he directed a unique chain of back-country hostels in the White Mountain National Forest. He is author of *New England's White Mountains: At Home in The Wild*, edited by David Brower.

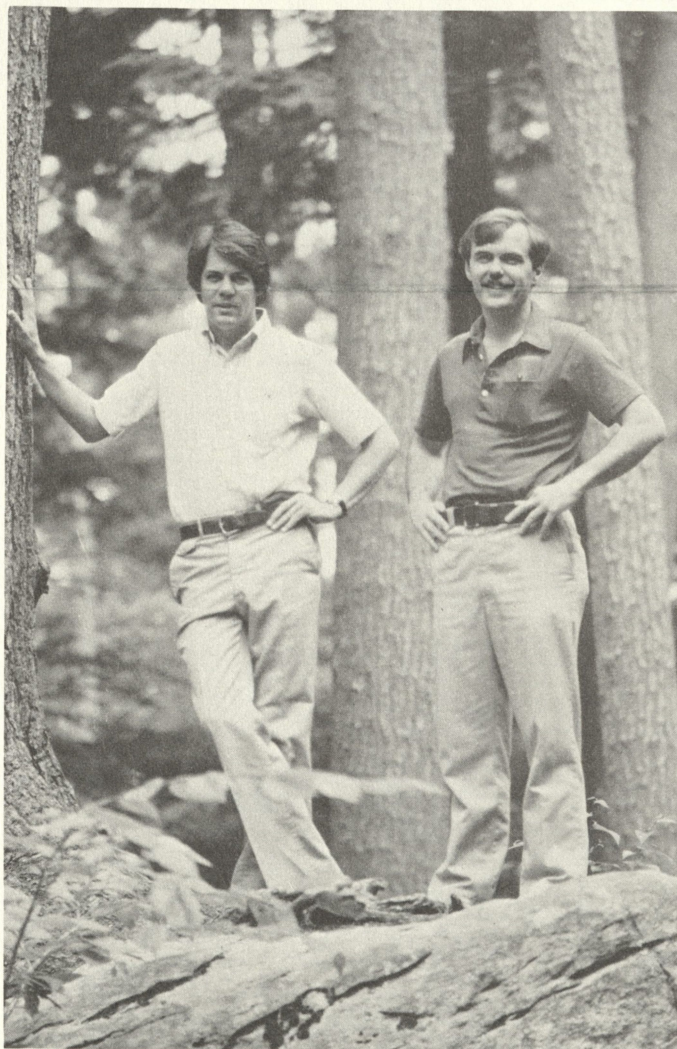
Ken holds a master's degree from Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. In 1980 he was appointed lecturer in the American Studies Program at Yale College. Ken is past editor of *Appalachia*, the nation's oldest journal of mountaineering and conservation.

"I'm looking forward to working with the volunteers and staff of the Conservancy," Ken said. "The Connecticut Chapter has amassed an enviable record in the preser-

vation of land. Conservancy members are selfless, forward-thinking people and I am pleased to contribute my energies to further their good work."

Asked what objectives are most immediately important, he responded, "We must increase the size of our membership, draw more financial support from the corporate community, and work to acquire prime examples of Connecticut's natural diversity. I am also concerned that we manage well our daily affairs and that we plan assiduously our activities for the next five years. Our work must reflect the will of the volunteers, yet must be consonant with objectives of the National and Regional Offices of the Conservancy."

Prior to Ken's appointment, Susan D. Cooley was acting director. The Board of Trustees recently named her Associate Director, in which capacity Susan shares many responsibilities with the Executive Director. She continues, also, as the Chapter's Stewardship Director.



Left to right: L. Gregory Low, Executive Vice President of The Nature Conservancy and W. Kent Olson, Executive Director, Connecticut Chapter, pause during a walk through Cathedral Pines Preserve.



Iron Mountain Reservation sign, erected at the newly completed parking lot, officially welcomes members into the preserve.

DEDICATION CEREMONY HELD AT IRON MOUNTAIN RESERVATION

Iron Mountain Reservation was dedicated at a well-attended gathering of Nature Conservancy members and guests in Kent, CT last month.

The preserve, one of Connecticut's largest, was the gift of Annabelle (Mrs. Walter E.) Irving, of Kent.

The ceremony, held in the newly graded and fenced parking area, featured welcoming remarks by Mrs. Irving's son, Griggs, an invocation by Rev. Richard L. Aiken, Chaplain of South Kent School, and brief comments by Mrs. Vilma Kurzer and Joseph Gitterman, current and past chairpersons, respectively, of the Preserve Committee. Alex Gardner represented the Chapter Board of Trustees.



Rev. Richard L. Aiken, Chaplain of South Kent School leads off the dedication ceremony with an invocation at the foot of the trail.

Mrs. Irving cut a ribbon, officially opening the first of a planned series of trails, which many of the guests then walked. After the walk, a reception was held at Mrs. Irving's home where guests were treated to a huge cake, baked in the shape of an outline map of the preserve.

Mrs. Irving was the recipient of a 1980 White Oak Award given by our Chapter for outstanding service to land preservation in Connecticut. As a land donor, she has been designated by the National Board of Governors of TNC an Honorary Member for Life.

Iron Mountain features a lovely mixed forest spreading over a wide expanse of hillside in an area rich in early Connecticut mining history. Those wishing to visit the preserve should call Mrs. Kurzer at (Tel.) 927-3173.



W. Griggs Irving and Iron Mountain Reservation Chairwoman, Mrs. Vilma Kurzer were two of the speakers at the opening.

PHELPS RESEARCH AREA HOSTS A WALK:

Imagine an area where records of its use for nearly 2 centuries are available. In New England where almost all the land has been altered by its inhabitants, that spells a gold mine to those studying vegetation development. John Blum and Frank Egler donated such an area to TNC in 1975. It is a research area.

On June 7 the Phelps Research Area Stewardship Committee hosted a walk over the woods road in the preserve. About 20 townspeople and Conservancy members were fascinated as Nancy Phelps Blum shared her wealth of historical knowledge about the area. Her family owned the farm from the first division of North Colebrook until a portion was given to TNC almost 200 years later. Rob Nurre, Ray Belding and John Lawson each added to the flow of information on existing features, research in progress and had suggestions for additional studies.

Returning to A. Phelps Inn, Mrs. Blum treated those who could stay to a tour of the historic building.

SUMMER STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

Summer's sultry weather slows down most activities, but in Connecticut it brings the excitement of interns and wardens. Their involvement with the Conservancy preserves is an important part of the Stewardship Program, coordinated by Susan Cooley and Winky Wright.

Interns Ted Elliman and Nancy Shapero come to us from Massachusetts, from the Otter Lake Environmental School and Williams College, respectively. They are compiling natural resources inventories for Silas Hall Pond, Frederic C. Walcott, Hamlet Hill and Patricia Winter Woodland Preserves in the northwest corner of the state. In addition, Ted and Nancy are conferring with the local stewards to devise a management plan for each preserve.

Jamie Johnston, a veteran of searches for bog turtles in Maryland, joins a combined effort with the State Department of Environmental Protection to find locations where *Clemmys muhlenbergii* lives. The bog turtle is in danger of extinction in Connecticut due to loss of its habitat and the zealousness of collectors. By identifying its haunts, TNC and the State can protect those locations as the first step toward protection of the species.

Three students from Connecticut College, Sarah Clark, Elsa Keagy and Caroline Buttrick, are studying the invertebrates of Pattagansett Marshes Preserve in East Lyme. Under the combined auspices of the College, Thames Science Center and The Nature Conservancy, these three will continue their research under the guidance of Dr. Paul Fell, and based on the findings of last summer's internship work.

Douglas Hexter at Pattagansett Marshes and Jane Downs and Neel Roberts at Griswold Point in Old Lyme, each spend several hours a week patrolling these popular preserves. Supplementing the efforts of the Stewardship Committees, these wardens enforce the preserve regulations and try to educate visitors about the importance of the dunes and marshes.

NEW TRUSTEES APPOINTED AND OFFICERS ELECTED

The Connecticut Chapter welcomes Martha Briscoe of Lakeville and Robert Chapman of Weston to its Board of Trustees. In addition, Dr. Thomas Siccama of East Haven has been reelected to fill the vacancy he created when he left the Board in 1978.

The Chapter's elected officers for 1980-1981 are as follows:

Peter B. Cooper, Chairman	John A. Blum, Treasurer
Peter Neill, Vice Chairman	Prudence Cutler, Secretary

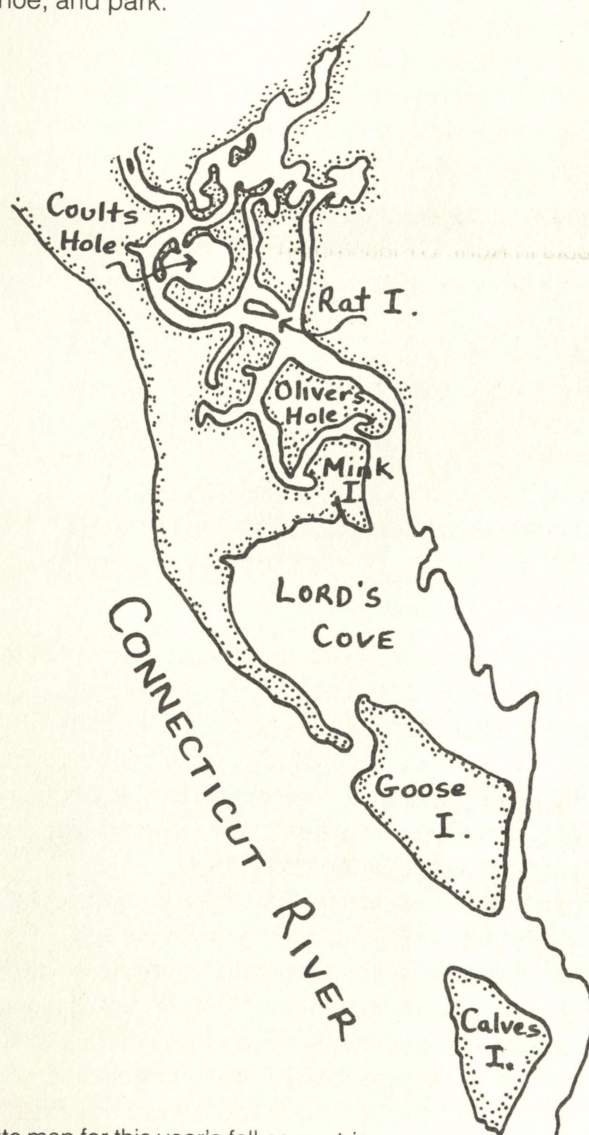
FALL CANOE TRIP TO LORD'S COVE

Set aside Saturday, September 20 for a canoe trip into Lord's Cove in Lyme. Located about six miles from the mouth of the Connecticut River the preserve is fed by Lord's Creek and is surrounded by tidal marsh.

We will put in by Calves Island and paddle up the backwaters of the Connecticut River, behind Goose Island, and into Lord's Cove. From here we will explore Lord Creek, Mink and Rat Islands, and Oliver's and Coult's Holes. The map illustrates the maze of waterways in which we will spend the day.

Space may be limited, so please make your reservations early. Send in a check for \$7.50 *per person* if you need to rent a canoe and \$2.50 if you have your own and wish to save a place in the flotilla.

Please include your name, address and telephone number. We will get back to you in early September to give you details of where and when to meet, drop off your canoe, and park.



Route map for this year's fall canoe trip.

OLD TRADITIONS BROKEN: NO RAIN AT ANNUAL MEETING

Sandwiched between one hot and sultry summer's day and another of mists and rain, came a most remarkable Saturday. On June 28 the skies were clear, the sun shone brilliantly, and a cool breeze wafted across the Salisbury School Campus where some fifty TNC members gathered to break the old tradition of soggy annual meetings.

Chapter Chairman Peter Cooper opened the meeting from home plate. The members, fanned out over the in-field, were introduced to the Chapter's two new Trustees, Martha Briscoe of Lakeville and Robert Chapman of Weston and to the Chapter's new Executive Director, Ken Olson.

Two pinch-hitters came out to take bows. Commended for her loyalty and generosity to TNC, Annabelle Irving, donor and protector of The Iron Mountain Reservation in Kent, was first to accept the Chapter's coveted White Oak Award. Michael Klemens, herpetologist with the American Museum of Natural History and second White Oak Award recipient, was praised for volunteering his time over the past several years to study the distribution of reptiles and amphibians on Conservancy preserves.



Michael Klemens (left) accepts White Oak Award from Chapter Chairman, Peter Cooper.

Susan Cooley was next at bat and gave a brief report of the Chapter's activities in 1979, highlighting the purchase of Bluff Head in Guilford and two gifts of land: Higby Mt. in Middlefield and Hamlet Hill in Salisbury. Winky Wright was given high praise for her leadership in helping preserve committees develop long-range stewardship plans for TNC land.

Greg Low, the Executive Vice President of our National Office, batted third. From homeplate he led Trustees, staff and friends across the prairies of the Midwest to TNC's most recent acquisition of 54,000 acres along the Niobrara River in Nebraska. Greg reported that the Conservancy's success is based on an unbeatable combination of a well thought-out plan, the professionals who



Peter Cooper (left) presents 1980 Chapter White Oak Award to Annabelle Irving for her outstanding support of the Iron Mountain Reservation. (See story inside.)

staff TNC, and the team-work afforded by our hard-working volunteers. His clear explanation of TNC's mission as "Noah's Ark," preserving critical habitat representative of America's great diversity, was a message enthusiastically shared by all.

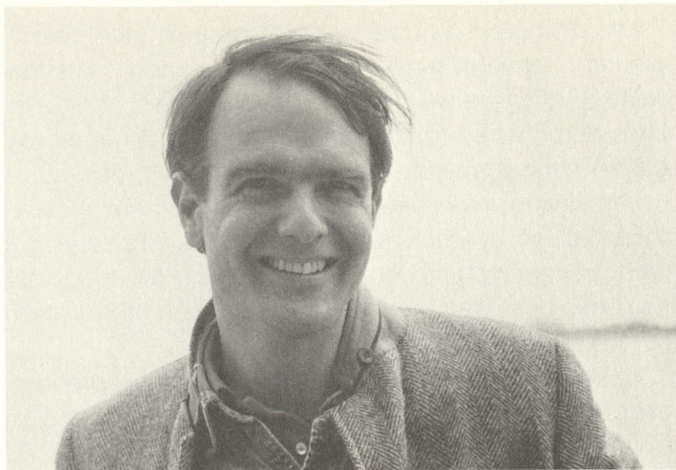
The clean-up hitter was Norm Sills, Coordinator for the Connecticut Appalachian Trail Committee (CATC). Norm explained that, like land protected by TNC, the trail corridor acquired by the National Park Service would provide lasting protection for a trail-side preserve. Of the 50-odd miles of trail that run through Connecticut, the Conservancy already manages more than 7 miles.

Following lunch, Norm led the group from Salisbury School through the woods and out into the bright fields of Hamlet Hill Farm. This path joined the Appalachian Trail at Rand's View, where the whole Taconic Range runs north to Mt. Greylock and beyond. The day was spotlessly clear, and the view was enjoyed by all. The meeting ended with a short walk up through the Conservancy's Hamlet Hill Preserve. This 320-acre tract is being inventoried this summer by one of our student interns, Nancy Shapero.

Some of the group remained at Salisbury School to view TNC's 1985 Plan, a satisfactory finale to a superb annual meeting in the sun.



Norm Sills, Connecticut Appalachian Trail Committee Coordinator explains trail protection to chapter members.



The staff and members of the Connecticut Chapter will miss Evan and extend their best wishes for his future success.

EVAN S. GRISWOLD STEPS DOWN

After more than three years at the Chapter's helm, Evan Griswold tendered his resignation in February, effective May 1.

Evan was responsible for almost 1,600 acres being preserved across Connecticut. Under his leadership such critical areas as Beeslick Preserve in Lakeville, Cobble Hill and Robbins Swamp in Canaan, Higby Mt. in Middlefield, Bluff Head in Guilford, and Hamlet Hill in Salisbury were acquired.

Evan was instrumental in acquiring major additions to Turtle Creek Wildlife Sanctuary in Old Saybrook, Weir-Leary-White Nature Preserve in Wilton, Devil's Den in Weston and Burnham Brook Preserve in East Haddam.

Evan's successor, Ken Olson, said: "Evan Griswold is well respected in the Connecticut environmental community. We at the office will work hard to build on the good will he has generated on behalf of the Conservancy."

The Trustees and staff join with those volunteers who worked with Evan in wishing him much success in whatever new undertakings he may choose in the future.

TNC NAMES NEW PRESIDENT

William D. Blair, formerly Deputy Assistant for Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, was recently selected to succeed Patrick F. Noonan as President of The Nature Conservancy. Bill brings impressive credentials to the post, including service on the National Board of Governors since 1972.

Pat Noonan, TNC President for the past seven years, will continue with the Conservancy and write its history.

LAND TRUST SERVICE BUREAU

The importance of Connecticut's land trusts has long been realized by The Nature Conservancy. Holding over 10,000 acres of open space and natural areas throughout the state, these 72 local non-profit organizations serve as a plausible adjunct to TNC.

In the past several years the Conservancy has seen the need to assist and coordinate the land trusts by means of a central service, and at long last, the Land Trust Service Bureau (LTSB) is underway.

The LTSB is envisioned as a two and a half year initial project, with start-up funding being provided through a generous anonymous contribution. Additional support will be forthcoming from the Conservancy and the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), as well as from other state and national foundations.

The Service Bureau will implement its coordination program through meetings and workshops and by the development of a Handbook. This Handbook will cover issues and problems facing the land trusts, such as tax, legal and insurance concerns; operation and management of property; and identification and acquisition of land.

Directing the Service Bureau program out of the Connecticut Chapter Office will be Suzi Wilkins, former Executive Director of the Long Island Sound Taskforce. Roger Koontz, Connecticut counsel for CLF, will provide legal assistance for the project. The Conservancy is pleased to have the involvement of these two individuals and looks forward to working with them.



CHAPTER TO PARTICIPATE IN HVA DAY

The Connecticut Chapter will participate in an exhibition sponsored by the Housatonic Valley Association, Saturday, September 13, at Mohawk Ski Area, Cornwall, CT. The theme is "Survival in the 80's." Over 3,000 visitors are expected to attend. The TNC exhibit is part of a program that includes nationally known speakers on environmental issues.

Members are cordially invited to visit the TNC booth. For more information call TNC's secretary, Marge Eaton at 344-0176.